**ICanServe Foundation**

**Silver Linings 2019**

**WRITE IT RIGHT**

**Healing by Storytelling and Journaling**

**PICC Room 7**

**SPEAKER : Gang Badoy**

**MODERATOR :**

1:40:12 Gang: (off mic start of the session) Time, making mistakes, only theirs is a little bit bigger. And nahuli sila, tayo hindi nahuli. Sinsabi namin lagi yun about my mom eh. Kasi sampu kaming magkapatid, ako yung number 10. So lagi namin sinasabi “Ang galing ni Mommy na mommy kasi sampu tayo tapos wala sa ating na-preso.” Pero actually, wala naman sa aming nahuli.

1:40:33 Gang: So how many of you, ilan sa inyo ang nagsulat dati, yung parang “Oh writer ako dati when I was young.” Like, grade school paper.

Audience: Editor.

Gang: Editor, great, ok good. Ok baka, you might need this class but since you’re here, I don’t think I’ll share anything spectacularly new. But I will certainly synthesize things na baka we forgot. Because I think we’re all writers, I mean, we are all writers. I don’t just think that.

1:41:04 Gang: (change in audio quality) Kasi as long as kaya mong mag-kuwento, kaya mong magsulat. I don’t know… (cut in audio) station from the story here and then pag sinusulat na or in this in our generations case, typing it (change in audio quality). Ako I’m a fan of hand writing. So as much as possible, if we can hand write, do it because first of all it’s very, very good for brain plasticit (change in audio quality), very, very good for your brain.

1:41:33 Gag: Next, I mentioned earlier, when you go through maraming, malalaking nangyayari, maraming, malalaking nafe-feel, kailangan mo siyang i-filter daw down sabayan ng kamay mo yung brain. Otherwise, it’ll just magwa-water falls lang siya tapos parang one sentence over the other in your head. Tapos ayaw mo na siyang sulatin. Sasabihin mo later na lang tapos you’ll never come around to writing it. Na why do we want to write? You have any… why do you want to write?

Audience: An outlet.

Gang: An outlet, that’s…

Audience: (off mic)

Gang: Perfect yes, another… many other reasons.

Audience: Like I was born with it.

Gang: You’re born with it. Cool, that’s a good thing to say. I love, I love that, we know that (music playing in the background). It’s always nice to make a journal. After years after at least we can recall what happened. Journaling, she, Flor said journaling, para many years later you can go back and recall good or bad things. But at least they’re on record…

1:42:36 Gang: (change in audio quality) documenting that’s one. Sorry… clarity ang galing mo naman, oo isa rin yun. Isa rin yun kasi pag sinulat mo na mas malinaw siya no in your own words.

1:42:46 Gang: (change in audio quality) Absolutely, we all have a story to tell. And you know what? There are many mixed feelings about social media but I’m always positive with it because it’s your chance to actually document, take pictures of your thoughts when they’re happening. Of course, there are bad, bad ways to use social media. You can cheat on each other, you can fight politically whatever. But actually if you’re on Facebook, how many of you here are on Facebook? Ok, if you’re on Facebook, na-experience mo na ito, yung parang 2 years ago, tapos “Whoa, sinabi ko yun?” and then you’ll say, “Oh I remember what was I going through.” Nananana. Or sometimes, you’re like, “Shit sinabi ko yun? Pwede ko pa bang i-delete?” Ganyan. So it’s so… so social media, Facebook, Twitter etc., nandiyan na siya eh, nandiyan na siya eh. We can’t let it go away anymore, sorry. And that… even so, therefore, use it. Use it for your clarity, for your recalling stories, for your optimizing current… for you expressing letting it out and people will comment, sometimes people will respond or reply. And sometimes they will help sometimes and most often, they don’t. But at least you wrote it. You know, this is your tool. This is your tool. I only say that because parang on the fly diyan pinaka madaling mag sulat on Facebook. Yan. (Music stops) But I will still always encourage a journal. I will still always encourage a journal. Ang hirap pag kids kasi parang yung journal nila ngayon Instagram. And I will flow over into mental wellness a little bit.

1:44:35 Gang: Grabe yung mental health need. Obviously we’re all gathered here because there was a physical health challenge but I, if you don’t mind, I would, I would rather stay with the mental health, wellness will happen because there are other, what do you call this, other people in your community that take care of your physical. So this morning, ay afternoon na pala, I will be your mental, this is your mental wellness clinic ok? Ok. Yung mga sinabi niyo, documenting, expressing, for clarity, optimizing, those are of, those are perfect answers actually. But what I really want you to, to concentrate on today kasi we’re doing exercises is really writing for you to heal. Parang hindi lang siya kuwento, ikuwento mo sa sarili mo. And a lot good happens when you talk to yourself. Please not out loud (laughs). Or kung may ibang tao, pwede mag-isa ka na lang, hindi loko lang. I’m just kidding. Of course, you’re free to talk to yourself wherever. So when you talk to yourself, I need the clarity is there kasi minsan no one watches out for you eh. More than you, yourself. I don’t know why when we were young, we imagine, “Ah we have a parent. We need a partner. We need a bestfriend, a good a friend.” And they are all fantastic! But you are all that to you. And when do you have these conversations, yung naka-upo ka, I’m sure alam niyo ‘to, ang sarap tumambay, umupo, kape, meryenda, or whatever it is that you have with a friend, you can have that with yourself when you write. And you have a retro-active conversation when you re-read what you write. So gift talaga siya (laughs). Gift talaga siya. It has saved me many times. For example, I wil give you one and then we start with that exercise. I left to study elsewhere sa, sa States. Tapos parang pag nandun ka na pala, magkaka momentum na parang, “Ay ganda sa States, dito na lang ako. Ang fair, ang just ng wages, tama yung pay…” etc, etc. “Ang komportable. Alam ko lahat kung nasan, efficient, walang masyadong traffic.” So you’re like (makes a sound) And then one day, I don’t know what it is but for 2 straight months, everyday nagigising ako na parang “Argh… gusto ko nang umuwi.” And then, you know what helped me? The person, me, who wrote a diary enrty at the airport when she left. I looked for it and I read my diary entry from must have been 11 years back, I was way younger, more idealistic using big words, you know, nakalagay dun, “I am leaving to come home, to come home braver, better, etc. I am not leaving to leave. I am leaving…” And I remember clearly where I wrote this, it was sa airplane kasi super tuwang-tuwa ako na I remember, I left on May 17. That when I arrived San Francisco, it was still May 17 and it was gonna be May 17 again. So parang meron akong joyful entry in my diary na, “Uy dalawa yung entry ko ng May 17.” So, these are the things you entertained yourself with. You know, have these conversations with yourself. It’s really… you write it down.

1:47:51 Gang: So want to start with an exercise ‘cause you have paper and pencil, etc. ok? Let’s start with that. Yung rekado ng, yung rekado ng writing and healing and communicating and possibly, good con, good friendships and relationships which we know is very crucial with healing and life in general, it really starts with words. Of course, there are other languages. There’s body language. There is visual language, there’s music, etc. But words, whether we like it or not, yan talaga yung nasa gitna ng Venn Diagram between us people eh, it’s words. You know, and how funny the same word, minsan ibang-iba yung meaning sa iyo. Sa bahay namin ang meaning ng “tanga” wala, normal. Baka sa ibang bahay, pag sinabihan kang tanga, painful, deep and hurtful, ganyan. Sa amin, yung tanga, funny, parang lambing siya or something. So how strange di ba? In our home naman, yung word na “Galing” ibig sabihin pumalpak ka, may nabasag ka or nagkamali. So in your households may mga ganyan. May sariling vocabulary every household, every family. So sa amin pag sinabi ng kuya ko or ate like, “Ang galing.” Ibig sabihin talagang may ginawa akong mali, di ba? And then when you’re fighting, let’s say there’s an argument with someone. Nagugulat ka na bakit my God ang laki-laki naman ng reaction nito. All I said was tanaga. Eh baka naman nung 3 years old siya or 4 years old siya ang lalim nung word. So we don’t know. We don’t know what the words are, how heavy they are to us or how light they are to others. So therefore, it’s good to be clear. Right? Maybe it’s the… maybe we don’t always chances kasi to explain what we mean, right? Pero upon first interaction we might want to be clear and how to be clear is you really have to get to know words. You have no business wanting to write better if you don’t read so much. Kahit sige, kahit articles na lang sa internet fine. Pero kung kaya libro, novel, essays, etc. try again, try again. Maybe hindi mo siya na pick up as a habit, maybe you did kasi that’s why you’re here in this room. Thank God. But then if it wasn’t your habit, try mo lang. Read something you’ve read before. Ayan na first assignment. If there was a novel you took up in college that bored the hell out of you, sorry is it ok to say bad words. You know in this administration, there is no bad words anymore (laughs). Bad words are just adverbs. Di ba? Parang, “Ang init! Basta ang init.” Parang very hot na lang yung ano, yung bad word, so please forgive me.

1:50:32 Gang: You know… what was I saying? Brain fog ako, nag brain fog ako. Sorry? Words. Oh yeah… the only way to be clear and when you read is you really have to get to know words kasi yan yung rekado ng communication. We keep forgetting this. We take words for granted. Para siyang gravity, hindi tayo grateful for gravity every day kasi sanay na sanay tayo may gravity. We never say, “Wow ang galing ng gravity today, hindi ako lumilipad into space.” Or “Yung t-shirt ko hindi umaangat kasi may gravity.” We know because it’s a given. But words, oh my gosh they will change your outlook, your relationship, your mode, your moods, everything. So naisip ko let’s start with a verb. An example, let’s say the verb of seeing someone my site. Pwedeng English or Tagalog ah. So what’s your name?

Audience: Abigail.

1:51:22 Gang: Abigail. So if I say, “I look at Abigail.” Give me another word for look. Saw, “I saw Abigail.” Another word? “I stared at Abigail.” Met? Pwede rin. I gazed, stalked, I glared, I viewed exactly. So did you notice what the difference is between nakita ko si Abby, tiningnan ko si Abigail, minasdan ko si Abigail, sinulyapan ko si Abigail, ano yung glare sa Tagalog? Tinitigan. Guys, it’s the same verb using your optical shit, whatever. Capacity to see but when I say glare, glare, gazed, see, look, observe, iba na yung emotion ng sentence right? Which goes to show, which goes to show what a difference one word makes and sometimes you must have had a romantic boyfriend, whatever relationship, and you used the wrong word and you lost him forever. And you lost each other forever kasi hindi mo na ma-explain yung word right? So I just always use that because that seems to be universal. Everytime I say, you know, when mag boyfriend fight, everybody nod. And you don’t understand each other yeah, because there are some people, I’m not gonna go gender, I was gonna go gender, but I was gonna say some guys, some humans have a narrower vocabulary na it’s just angry, sad, tired. Eh some humans naman, I was gonna go gender again like some women, generally that’s what they say, 85 words for sad and upset na “I’m not mad, I’m upset.” But of course, for my brother does the same right? For him mad looks like lion attacking. And for me mad is just looking out the window right? So wala na. So this is how wonderful it is actually to be a master of the medium which is words right?

1:53:27 So one, mastery kasi pareho yan ng prose, water color, brush, iba yung attitude every time but words always (sighs) haaaa… if you can’t be… if you can’t be anything, at least be clear you know. So yun, it’s the kind of thing to be you know, to be clear. To let’s do a prop. Sino sa inyo na ang naba-blanko, yung parang…

Flor: Oh my gosh…

Gang: Oh, is that you Flor? Like, I’m going to write today or I want to write, I need to write or I will write and then nothing.

Flor: Yes.

Gang: Why?

Flor: Distraction.

Gang: Distraction, pagod ok, oo kasama yun.

Audience: Over run by emotion.

Gang: Over run by emotion, oo nga, oo nga. So, me, so now that you’ve brought that up minsan, it’s the timing when you decide when to write. Minsan, timing is everything. Ganyan din sa mag-boy friend. (laughs) Minsan, ano…. Yes! Minsan, timing. You don’t exactly write when it’s turbulent, yata. Maybe. Some…

Flor: I think it’s even better to, to write when it’s turbulent.

Gang: Ah cool, let’s hear this kasi I’m not of that… it’s better to write…

Flor: You can always write everything…

Gang: And then you’ll just edit next week? (audience laughs) Or not.

Flor: Edit and then you write, “Oh my God…”

Gang: Oh my God, how angry was I. Oo. Oo. So no, no, minsan sobrang daming emotions, etc. So hindi ako sure kung bakit hindi tayo nag a-apply ng method or process into writing. Kasi we, I think, thought writing is a gift. Yung celestial gift siya from heaven, yung you’re born with it. You know, I need to tell you pwede, pwede. But I think writing is not a gift. I think writing is a skill. And it’s really something you can practise. I think the gift part will only take you so much. I think there are gifted children in Math or Music because that’s, that’s rhythm, that, that sort of algorithm in your brain na parang rhythm-rhythm siya. Pero I think writing, I think it needs time, experience, mastery, of course mastery of words which some children can have but they will never have the dust or the texture of someone who’s really been through pain, facing mortality, recovering, deep loss, deep gain, sarap ng deep gain no? (laughs) Sana mas maraming deep gain. And endless dark seasons na parang hindi na matatapos. Oo, dark season, dark nights talaga and then it’s so funny because we never, we always forget that there are seasons. We always forget like for example, “Oy tawa tayo nang tawa. Baka next week malungkot na tayo.” Di ba ganyan? Parang ayaw mong tumawa nang super lakas kasi baka, sabi ng Lola ko next week baka malungkot tayo. Iyak tayo nang iyak. Right? Which is so weird because you never do that when you’re crying. Pag humahagulgol ka ba you say, “Ohhh… iyak tayo nang iyak, next week tatawa ako.” Never. Never. It’s always the opposite. (audience laughs) So I don’t know why we only apply the belief of seasons and cycles when it’s going to be bad. But not, how come we are never crying and saying na, “No, it’s ok I’m crying this week baka next week I’ll be happy.” Rare. I don’t know why. So train yourself to actually change that. Why? I mean, you know. So I don’t know why negative yung hashtag na walang forever. Are you killing me? That’s the best, most positive, optimistic hashtag in the world. Why do always say walang forever, parang negative. Huhuhu… yey! Which means when I have bad stretches, hindi yan forever! Yey! I have pain, hindi yan forever di ba?

1:5713 Gang: So first one, there’s a happy time and walang forever or walang seasons. You know that and besides if you’re for straight 365 days, there’s something wrong with you or you’ll be exhausted. I don’t think anybody laughs out loud for 365 days and good news, nobody cries for 365 days straight. Guys, nawalan ako ng bestfriend, death, early age. I have 2 friends who were murdered and I saw them in the crime scene. And I really thought hindi matatapos itong sadness na ito. For… you know what? They’re right. After 4 or 5 weeks, parang cowboy na kang umiyak, wala na, parang feeling mo gusto mo pa rin umiyak. Your brain will automatically protect you like even if you’re still feeling it, I don’t think you’ll hagulgol the same way you did last week. Wala, even if you force it. And there are days when you are so confused kasi parang dapat yata umiiyak pa ako. Why? Walang dapat, no! The seasons will happen. The seasons will happen. They will come and they will go. (Flor coughs) My God, they will go sometimes right?

1:58:20 Gang: I’m going to play a track, music and when you’re listening, while you’re listening, these are the instructions. Three lines, when I say lines (beeping sound) it doesn’t mean full sentences pero pwede. It means a phrase, a word, or a full sentence if you wish, basta 3 lines. Ok? Of what you’re picturing if this is the song. Like, kung closing??? Nito (music plays) (Gang talking in the background but inaudible)

2:00:03 Gang: By this, I mean, listen to the track and write whatever… (music is playing)

2:00:37 Gang: This is easy 3 lines lang, who wants to start? Kasi… magbibigay ako ng time. 3 lines can be phrases, a list of three words, full sentences. Go…

Audience: Ok, rain…

Gang: You want a light?

2:01:06 Audience: This is my kind of music actually.

Gang: Sure. Sure, how is it?

Audience: (Flor coughing) So… this is what I usually play when I’m, when it’s raining. So it’s like rain on the window pane. 5:30PM is my favorite time of day. It’s 5:30PM, last is…

Gang: Good.

Audience: It’s what I’m reading…

Gang: Ok, ok, what is your name?

Audience: Ok, Boods?

Boods: Yes?

Gang: Don’t do the explanation just read the 3 lines.

Boods: Yeah, ok. It’s rain on window pane. 5:30PM and books.

Gang: Beautiful. Right? Ok, who wants to do it? Ok…

Audience2: I am thinking of my mom and dad and it is…

Gang: Awww… ok.

Audience3: Sunny, old, grass is green, park, a younger me… an older me having a leisurely walk with my son.

Gang: Ok, sir?

Audience4: I see a woman, curly hair, driving on… running for the…… sunset…

Gang: Ikaw na…

Audience5: Ok, soothely it flows, quietly it surrounds, tranquility felt.

Gang: Nice. You don’t need this session at all.

Audience6: Going out on a date. Self discovery and gazing at the stars.

Gang: Gazing at the stars. Beautiful no? Clark keeps saying, “Oh my gosh.”

Audience7: Mine is so negative.

Gang: No wait…

Audience7: What I see is tragedy, death and in a church.

Gang: Ok. No, yeah. Do you? Anybody else wants to share? Ok. Ah hello.

Audience8: Good afternoon everyone. Mine is magical garden, boat and alone in a river, happy chit-chat or confined with a close friend.

Gang: Yes.

Audience9: Oh me. Hello, hello. Akin din malungkot. Yeah…

Gang: Huwag i-explain.

Audience9: Goodbye to my childhood home, that’s what I saw.

Gang: Childhood home?

Audience9: Yeah and then…

Gang: I’m sorry…

Audience9: Goodbye to my childhood home. And then my dog is off to the rainbow bridge.

Audience: Awwww…

Audience9: Wala na… ano na lahat… (laughs)

2:03:28 Gang: Isn’t it amazing you listened to the same track. Ok. Abby, Abby.

Abby: Running heavily but like in a small motion. Thinking. Staring to nothing.

Gang: And it the running heavily, you rarely use heavily to describe running but that’s actually accurate. I know. Ok, go ahead.

Audience10: A walk on the beach. Foot prints and sea breeze.

Gang: Foot prints and sea breeze. Yan, galing! Oh anyway…

Audience11: I’m thinking of a start of a journey, a train moving, passing sceneries.

Gang: Don’t explain just read the 3 lines, read the 3 lines.

Audience11: That’s it…

Gang: Ah the train moving… that’s really your lines…

Audience11: Yeah. That was it, the 3 lines.

Gang: That’s why because I have very little time. I wish we have all day but I’m trying to compress what I want to baon you with. So did you see what happened? You just, nakinig kayo sa same track, hindi pa yun…. Which means, which means… when you write yata, I’m not, there are no… you, you really bring what’s with you already. Ok? Very rarely do we… start from a blank and from nowhere. Maybe you remember the wake, maybe you had a sunset walk, maybe you’ve never had a sunset walk and you want one. Maybe dog is foremost top of mind, I don’t know but did you see? I just asked you to write 3 lines, and dala mo halos lahat ng nasa bulsa mo in your brain right?

2:05:02 Gang: This second track most of time, it’s stuff you remember when you write eh. You’re dog, before childhood home, your parents, etc., etc. And that’s fine ‘cause that’s the first thing where your brain usually goes, memory, what you remember. But this is a creative writing class. I want you to create. So, take out everything you remember, everything you’ve known, listen to a track and create 3 lines. Does that… This is how Harry Potter happened you know, the Narnia. They created worlds kahit na, what’s the word? What’s that, green… Game of Thrones, ever right? But this time listen to it and please… create. Don’t bring yourself in it. (music starts playing) Create. Kaya ba natin yun? Teka this is not the track, sorry.

2:06:04 Gang: This is the track, hopefully it’s something you’ve never heard. (music playing) (Gang talking to some people in the audience)

2:06:42 Audience4: Two women refusing to become a giant woman. (music is still playing)

2:07:25 Gang: Anything with sprinkles. So pwedeng ice cream, pwedeng chicharon sa pansit (laughs) gallon-gallon??? Yun lang sini-sprinkle ko… anybody else? (laughs)

Audience: Bawal…

Gang: I know. Bah, let’s go further. Let’s go further, with this song what do you smell?

Audience: Cinnamon.

Gang: Cinnamon. What else. Vanilla?

Audience4: Lilac and carnations.

Gang: Lilac and carnations. Hindi ko pa ma-picture yung smell…

Audience: Lavender…

Gang: Lavender!

Audiece: Lemon.

Gang: Lemonade?

Audience: Lemon.

Gang: Lemon. Ok, so of course there’s no (music is still playing) right or wrong, right? But I’m, just demonstrating is when you’re in a blank and you really want to write, you can’t immediately write the essay. Parang gym, you need to push ups and sit ups. Sometimes you need to prod yourself. So help yourself along with your other senses. What do you smell? Pick up ah… a track from You Tube or Spotify or kahit saan mag-Google ka, based on nothing but the title or hindi moa lam yung song, play it and then discipline yourself and say, “I’m gonna write based on this song.” Ok now, I know the first one is, you just drew out mga things na naalala mo, things from your past, things you’ve worried about, things on top of your mind. And then the second, I hope, I was trying to say, there’s another way to do this ha. Pwede ka ring mag create ng fiction like ibang world and really because it’s how you escape, it’s how your brain travels also.

2:08:56 Gang: Both are good methods, so I want you to let music help you when you write. Alam mo, if all else fails, just google classical music, sac??? Wala and just randomly you know, make, make the universe help you why not. And, and go from there. This is just a jump start exercise from, for when you’re blocked. Right? And the reason why I wanted to start with this is, well we’ll also kind of end with this… sayang ang effect, we’ll also kind of end with this… make your senses help you. Make your senses help you write. Like, for example, if you want to discuss your childhood, if you want to finally write about your childhood, whether it’s painful or dark or happy or boring (laughs), start with the senses. What did you smell? What smell reminds you of the most of your childhood? What food? What color? You know, I really like it when I try to remember ‘cause my mother has Alzheimer’s and so memory is big to me. And I always like to remember na, anong choices niya sa colors sa clothes. Ano yung, kasi iba, iba yata yung era nun eh parang lahat matching. So… saka lahat amoy Heno de Pravia (laughs) Parang naiisip ko, parang… kasama yung senses ko in remembering and I also know that nagka time lucid pa yung Mommy ko, parang every other day or etc, pero ngayon medyo blank na siya but my last interaction was I let her smell lavender yeah, and then she put 2 thumbs up. And then I let her smell peppermint and she did the gesture of toothbrush, ok. Yun yung last cognitive and I realized, “Wow, ang grabe, ang galing ng smell.” Kasi blanko na yung Mommy ko eh, hindi na niya ako naalala eh. Pero peppermint, nag toothbrush siya. So parang, “Yehey! May interaction ako that day.” And I thought, “Wow ang lakas ng smell.” And why do we ignore? Or wrong not ignore. We can’t ignore our sense of smell but we don’t really celebrate it. I should tell you this, when we have no nose slits, so we cannot close our noses unless you do it consciously. Pag may dumaan na basura truck, wala kang choice, uupo talaga sa lap mo yung basura smell and “Hello, amoy basura tayo.” Tapos ikaw parang “Oh, God. Oh God.” And you try to remedy it but not really breathing. Or you breath with your mouth in which case it’s worse because you still smell it and you kind of taste it. But your brain, your brain will really help you after 3 or 4 maybe 2 minutes even, magda-dull siya tapos kaya mo na yung smell sa room, right? Kaya mo na. Mag a-adjust siya. Now if the smell is over powering, let’s say it’s a large wet basura or you know, to make it more morbid maybe dead bodies, your brain will be a little slower than the smell. So baka maduwal? Tama ba yun? Baka maduwal ka. So hindi kaya pero eventually mag a-adjust ka rin. I know this. I’ve been exposed to Tacloban. You know, it’s the worst smell I’ve encountered in my life. There was a lot of dead bodies and we were traveling and the smell, hindi, hindi ako natulungan ng brain ko. I really, I really gagged. So naisip, but then after a while… kaya na, kaya na, kaya mo nang huminga. I mean you still know it’s there.

2:12:16 Gang: This exactly explains why you have friends na malakas mag cologne. Right? Sana hindi kayo yun. Pero kung feeling mo, you really need to detox, yun yata yun, take a break para when you get back to exposing tama, tama yung calibration ninyo sa smell. I think ganito rin sa ugali, ganito rin sa happiness kasi your brain somehow hahanapin niya yung balance eh. Pag sobrang lakas ng cologne mo, hindi ka na rin nalalakasan sa cologne mo kasi sanay ka buong araw. Lakas lakas sa kausap mo, alam mo ito, dami kong DOM na kilala ganito (laughs). Oo, hindi… and even, perhaps even body order or… hindi ka rin sanay di ba? Eventually nasasanay kayo dun, you don’t smell it anymore. Kasi kaya ng brain mo i-even out. It’s the same with your feelings by the way when they’re large. Your brain will somehow make your brain help you protect you to get the balance and you eventually, you don’t do anything harmful to yourself or other people or generally harmful. But parang, get to know your brain. And the way to get to know your brain is to really through your senses. Alam mo when you smell something and you remember, you know why? Guys, please don’t forget, when you smell something it’s not like wifi, it’s not magic. A molecule, a physical molecule actually touces your nose. Like, when you peel an orange tapos nakikita mo yung (makes a sound) alam mo yan, meron talagang nag evaporate dun at umabot sa ilong mo ah. It touched your nose at ang lapit-lapit ng ilong mo sa limbic system which is where your memories, your feelings, etc, ang lapit, I mean geographically mag kapitbahay sila eh. So ang lapit kaagad.

2:14:00 Gang: So make your, what you smell help you. You know, this is why we know which ---- alam mo na as you got older. Without even meaning to you know, I don’t like the smell of apple. I like cucumber melon. I like lavender. I like mint. I don’t like this. I like citrus generally. I don’t like citrus generally. And it’s not just the physical. Sometimes it’s also association with a memory, right? Ayaw na ayaw ko yung smell ng floor wax, yung floor wax na pula na industrial na floor wax, yung pang ganun. Kasi yung memory, tapos naisip ko, “Bakit ayoko ng floor wax?” Hindi siya, generally I like the smell of solvents eh, sorry. (laughs) No, seriously I know, not what you imagine but generally I like the smell of (sniffs) the ocassional gas whiff when they’re putting gas. I like the smell of glue. I like the smell of any resin. I like the smell of…

Audience: Acetone…

Gang: Acetone, minsan cute ung acetone parang uy… generally I like it. But then I said, “Why I don’t like floor wax?” And then I realized, “Argh…” meron akong one day kasi I’m the 10th child nga eh, so nakakalimutan na akong sunduin, hindi ako sinundo ng, nasundo ako very, very late from school, na may floor wax na, nalinis na ulit for the next day, nakalimutan akong sunduin so parang I think the association with the smell is really ah loneliness, hindi ako mahal, nakalimutan ako, hindi ako sinundo, etc. And so the minute I figured that out, I still don’t like the smell by the way, but it doesn’t hurt me anymore like before. You have to know these things. I think they use it, very loosely now, the word trigger but you need to get to know your triggers. Because sometimes pag hindi mo siya kilala, umiiyak ka lang one day and you’re not sure why. And that is depression by the way. Sadness, sadness is you know why you’re sad, you got… you broke up, you lost your dog, etc, etc and you’re sad. That’s --- and variety. It always arranged. Depression I think is sadness na nakalimutan. Why? Because baka nandun, baka from the past na hindi mo naalala na na trigger at may reason ba’t hindi mo siya naalala. Kasi kung super laki ng trauma, ipo-protect ka ng brain mo. Let’s say, sexual abuse, molesting, your brain will say, “I will protect this.” So sometimes you forget right? Most of the time, you don’t even remember. You don’t, you can’t remember your deepest trauma every day. That’s too, that’s too difficult, your brain will protect you. But sometimes there’s a trigger. There’s the smell, somebody reminds you of it, etc, etc. and then something happens.

2:16:31 Gang: If you’re not aware of your story, you will be lost in this, “Ano ito?” in this depression. So it always helps that you can write down for clarity, who said clarity? For recall, for expressing what’s inside, optimizing what you have, and remembering. So sometimes you need to do that kahit yung hard parts kailangan mo yan, kahit phrases, try. ‘Cause that, you know that’s how you heal. It’s like an appendicitis. It’s just there, anytime it can burst and you’re aware that it’s there and you don’t want surgery, why? Because I don’t like anesthesia, I don’t like the down time, so nandiyan lang siya. Andiyan lang siya. You know you need to kinda go through it, lahat, anesthesia, get through the surgery, take it out, you’ll have downtime and then you heal. It’s the only way to heal. It is the same with stories. It’s the same with hate. It’s the same with trauma. It’s the same with, sorry you might not sorry, you will need help kasi kailangan mo ng anesthesia. For some the anesthesia is meds, for some it’s a triathlon (laughs). For some it’s Zumba, I don’t know what your anesthesia is but you need anesthetics to get some painful thing out and that’s the only way to heal. It’s really like a splinter. You can really leave it alone and you’ve done this. Yung may naiwan diyan na ayoko. Ayoko. Kasi ayaw mong i-cut talaga tapos nandiyan lang siya tapos ung iba nga 2 weeks na, ma i-infect na, nakikita mo pa yung splinter. That happened to me eh. Nung na-realize ko, “Shucks sana pinatanggal ko na lang ito.” And now it’s there, nag grow yung skin ko. They’re gonna have to purposely cut it and get it out. It’s the only way it recovered and it is the same with our trauma, with our pain, with our hate, with our etc. Yes, mental health and physical health, super halos eksakto. Seriously, you know what, mental… and it’s always arranged, ok. Ang mental health ay, may favorite ballpen ka pag hindi dala, ayaw mo na mag notes ok. Ayaw na, hindi lang yun, pag super buang ka, ipapa stop mo pa yung teacher, “Wait, uuwi lang ako, kukunin ko yung notebook, tapos…” Ang super buang is ini-expect mo hihintayin ka (audience laughs) Ok? Alam mo kung anong sound? Alam mo kung anong mentally sound? “Eh sana it’s my ballpen kasi favorite ballpen ko yun kasi magaling akong mag notes pag may ballpen.” And then your classmate says, “Ito may ballpen, hiramin mo na.” “Haaaa…” Magno-notes ka pa rin kasi there’s a task at hand. So what did you do? You adjusted. You adjusted. Are you happy? No. Magka mental wellness is not happy. Mental wellness is capacity to adjust whe your favorite ballpen is not there but you need to take notes and you will still take notes.

Audience: Akala ko sinabi mo, favorite boyfriend.

2:19:04 Gang: Ballpen, ballpen (laughs)

Audience: Boyfriend, pwede rin (laughs)

Gang: Pwede rin, pwede rin. Use the favorite boyfriend (audience laughs) and the second favorite boyfriend is pwede na ‘to, pwede na ‘to. Hind loko lang…

Audience: You cannot move on eh.

Gang: You know what I mean? So yun yata yung mental wellness, pareho ng physical wellness. Exposed ka sa virus, exposed ka ano but either you have your immune system is working or you have Vitamin C yesterday or you kind of get the sniffles and then you took Lola Remedios and your fight (laughs) And then, or whatever. Nakaka… or you get sick, 2 days you’re fine, you know. Pwede rin yun, ganun din sa mental wellness. There are triggers, death, loss, break up, a fight, and etc. If you are mentally in the range of balance, you will kind of just say “Argh… but I will, I have to do it.” You know, but have to I mean daily duties and obligations. Yun naman yung greatest indicator eh. Kung hindi mo na kaya yung daily duties and obligations…

Audience: Depressed ka na…

2:19:58 Gang: Dun ka kailangan yun… you have to pause and either you ask for help, re-assess, if you can still talk to yourself through it great, etc. Some of you may have a faith, a faith methods to come and save you or etc. Yun, there’s another but still if it’s in the way of your daily duties and obligations, you need to pause baka that’s the unwell part. So I encourage to go, I encourage you to write and if you’re stuck, help with senses. You know what else you can do other than music? Find something to smell and just close your eyes. And write something based on the smell. Ok, write something based on the smell. And mix up your senses. “Good… ang sarap nito, yung ano synesthesia.” You know, what does the song smell like? What’s the color of the, what’s the color of the song? If your mood had a color, what color is it really? Help yourself. And it’s not, it’s not hard actually coz you have 5 senses. Yehey! Di ba? Some are dull than others but yey pa rin right? So I encourage, I need you to know, writing is not so much a gift, it’s a skill. You need to do the push ups and sit ups. And when you want to play good basketball by the way, you don’t play basketball anyway, but pwede why not? But you still need to do the push ups, the sit ups and etc because when you’re playing on court, you still need the strength of your quads and the strong and felixble athlete is usually the better player. Kasi kahit super galing mo mag shoot, kung 5 minutes pa lang pagod ka na, matatalo ka ng someone na kahit mababa yung average niya sa shooting pero nakakatakbo pa siya during the game, does that make sense? It’s the same with writing. So do the exercises, stay with your senses and write your story kasi people have to hear your story. And sayang, sayang. And I hope you enjoyed and learned something today. I want to hear from someone though kasi we have like a few more minutes or no more na? Any, any you learned today? Flor?

2:22:02 Flor: What do you want…

Gang: Is there something you picked up today.

Flor: Oh yes. I’ve always been interested in, gustong-gusto ko talagang magsulat kasi sometimes we have a lot of things to say, not for myself but to tell my story, to encourage people and para, basta lang, maganda talagang masabi ang ating istorya. But I never started it kasi I didn’t know what to do and I feel… where to start. That’s why I was so interested in you coming here.

Gang: Thank you. Minsan talaga kailangan lang yung senses eh. Like, it doesn’t even, you know, sometimes… I just need like, if I leave now and I say “Oh how well…” if they say, “How was your… session with ICanServe this morning?” I’ll say, “Ive never seen so much pink people in my life.” And that’s always such a good thing right? I mean, that sounds like a good thing. I have never seen so much pink in one place. And that’s one sentence, that’s just one sentence. What did it convey? I am happy, it’s a happy place, it’s a gathering. I liked it. You know, I think it’s an accomplishment that you’re all here and I say, and I just say, “There are so much pink women.” Yeah, and I, yeah… yun na yung caption of your picture and sometimes that makes all the difference. I didn’t need to explain that it was a gathering, it’s really etc, it’s healing, it’s a community. Didn’t I just said, “Wow! I’m so happy. I saw so many pink women today.” Right? So you can say it that way. When you’re lost and you really want to express, start with colors, start with smell. It’s like, “Anong color ng feeling ko?” Then stay there then go from there. Right? So let your senses help you. It will save you, they will save you. And when your story comes out, your story will save others. So yehey! I hope you had fun. (clapping) Thank you and enjoy the rest of the day.

Gang: Bitin…

Audience: Sayang…

Gang: Bitin, oo nga eh. Pag workshop parang kailangan, gusto ko sana magsulat pa kayo and read it kaya lang we’re only given…

Audience: Picture….

Gang: Let’s have a pink picture, ok. Thank you… Did you… Hello… Gina??? I miss my friend… (kisses a friend)

Gina: Hello. Magshe-share sana ako…

Gang: Oo nga eh, sayang… ang igsi ng time.

Gina: Oo nga eh. I didn’t…

**2:24:24 END OF SESSION**

**END OF TRANSCRIPT**